Establishment of a national gas grid

756. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what is Government's action plan to address serious regional imbalance in natural gas sector in States like West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa in eastern region which are totally gas-starved.;

(b) whether a national gas grid is being planned on the lines of National Power Grid;

(c) if so, whether such gas grid is being planned to be developed through GAIL like Power Grid Corporation in Power Sector; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) There is no source of natural gas supply in States like West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa at present. However, the requisite infrastructure will develop once sources of supply from within or outside the States are firmed up.

(b) to (d) No, Sir. Government have no plan at present for setting up a National Gas Grid on the lines of the National Power Grid. However, GAIL propose to take up various pipeline projects linking different sources of gas to demand centres with natural gas pipelines, in a phased manner. As per the preliminary estimates of GAIL, Phase-I of their gas grid involves approximately 7,900 Kms. of pipeline and an expenditure of Rs. 20,000 crore.

Borrowings of oil PSUs

757. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total outstanding borrowings of oil PSUs as on March 31,2004; and

(b) what is the amount of interest being paid on these borrowings?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The total outstanding borrowings of oil PSUs as on 31 st March, 2004 was Rs. 31,565.34 crore.